PACKAGING AND PACKING

Purpose

This instruction defines policies and procedures for examining products for condition and container requirements.

Policy

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure products presented for certification meet the condition of container requirements before offering to USDA graders for certification.

Procedures

At time of shipment, each lot will undergo an examination for packaging and packing defects. Primary containers will be examined for cuts, tears, holes, improper closure, excess moisture, and dirty, smeared, or stained areas affecting the usability of the container. Shipping containers will be examined for condition, labeling, and markings. The examinations will be according to the criteria listed in the United States Standards for Condition of Food Containers, dated November, 1980. Graders will use the sampling levels listed and report the examination results on QAD 110. Refer to 616 Sealing, Stamping, and Control of Containers on how to mark the master containers.

As an option for examination at time of shipment, the packaging and packing examinations may be performed online or in conjunction with the 72-hour freezing verification check. The classification criteria and resources currently used for assessing defects during examination will also be used for the optional procedures.

I. Online Sampling

For products that are quick chilled/frozen using inline systems, the packaging and packing examination may be performed online. Online sampling for packaging and packing may be performed as the frozen packages are boxed and labeled. Procedures and controls for processors utilizing this method must be reviewed and approved by the Supervisor.

Each shipping container and five primary (one from each case) containers shall be examined during each sampling interval in accordance with the defects classification. Separate sample grids shall be completed for packaging and packing. Documentation of each defect class will be as follows:

Critical defects = C
Major defects = M
Minor defects = √

Record multiple defects on a primary container as one defective unit regardless of the total number observed. The most serious defect observed shall be recorded. For critical and major defects, enter the letter "C" three times and "M" twice, respectively, for each defect. This weighted tolerance will allow a major defective unit only when there is no carryover. When the number of defect units exceeds the upper limit, the product the sample represents will be retained. Product represented by any sample containing a critical defective unit shall be retained.

When a rejection occurs, the product must be reworked prior to resampling. Upon reworking, 5 containers shall be selected and examined according to the same acceptance criteria used online. Management should be notified when the number of defects reaches the upper limit or a major defect is encountered. The following example shows the correct way to record data:

Packaging

SAMPLE:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
TIME:	8:00	8:45	9:30	10:30	11:20	11:55	12:40	1:15	2:00
ITEM: 3 / 10 lb. poly bags Chicken Nuggets							**M**		
	√				**M**	√	**M**		
DATE: mm/dd/yyyy	/	**X**	√	√	**M**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**0**

Packing

SAMPLE:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
TIME:	8:00	8:45	9:30	10:30	11:20	11:55	12:40	1:15	2:00
ITEM: 30 lb. Box Chicken Nuggets									**C**
		M				√			**C**
DATE: mm/dd/yyyy	/	**M**	**X**	**0**	√	√	**X**	**0**	**C**

II. Lot Sampling

For products not subjected to online sampling, the samples used for checking compliance with the 72-hour freezing requirement shall be used for the packaging and packing examination. Additional samples shall be selected as necessary. Product will either be accepted, retained, or require a second sample based on the number of containers, sample size, and criteria as follows:

Production lots ≤ 500 shipping containers:

CODE _____	NUMBER OF SAMPLE UNITS	CRITICAL		MAJOR		**TOTAL** (minor, critical, and major)	
		Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re
FIRST SAMPLE	9	0	1	0	2	0	2
SECOND SAMPLE	9						
TOTAL SAMPLE	18	0	1	1	2	2	3

Production lots > 500 shipping containers:

CODE _____	NUMBER OF SAMPLE UNITS	CRITICAL		MAJOR		**TOTAL** (minor, critical, and major)	
		Ac	Re	Ac	Re	Ac	Re
FIRST SAMPLE	18	0	2	0	2	1	4
SECOND SAMPLE	18						
TOTAL SAMPLE	36	1	2	1	2	5	6

The initial sample size shall be 9 or 18 shipping containers, depending on the production lot size. The samples required for the packaging defects examination will be obtained from the sample containers taken for the packing defects examination. All primary containers will be examined in each master container until the appropriate sample size is satisfied. For example: Lot size 600 containers, 4 primary containers per box. Eighteen samples are required for packaging & packing inspection. All 18 master containers will be evaluated for packing defects. All primary containers in samples 1 through 4, and 2 primary containers in sample 5 will be evaluated for packaging defects. The criteria listed on Form QAD-110 shall be used in checking the primary and master shipping containers for the applicable defects.

With regard to packing only, each lot will undergo a scanning inspection at time of shipment to identify obviously damaged containers that may have occurred subsequent to the initial examination. When damaged containers are encountered, the lot shall be retained until the containers have been removed and replaced. As necessary, the grader may take additional samples at time of shipment to ensure no further damage has occurred.